

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 03674 132043Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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POUCHED INFO ALL CANADIAN POSTS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, CA

SUBJ: MITCHELL SHARP TO RESIGN

REF: OTTAWA 3644

1. TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL ON SEPT 13 RAN FRONT PAGE STORY REPORTING THAT MITCHELL SHARP, PRESIDENT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL, HAS ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION TO RESIGN FROM THE CABINET. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE BY THE RELEASE OF A LETTER WRITTEN ON JULY 15 TO PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU OFFERING TO RESIGN AT THE LATTER'S CONVENIENCE.

2. MR. SHARP IS QUOTED AS SAYING, " NOW THAT THE LIBERAL CAUCUS...IS OVER, I UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER INTENDS TO MAKE SOME CHANGES IN THE CABINET AND THAT HE WILL AT THAT TIME ACCEPT MY RESIGNATION." SHARP EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT RESIGNING BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY. REMAINDER OF ARTICLE PROVIDED BIOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND ON SHARP'S CAREER.

3. COMMENT: TIMING OF SHARP ANNOUNCEMENT
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 03674 132043Z

MAKES CLEAR THAT CABINET SHUFFLE IS NOT FAR

OFF. AFTER 34 YEARS IN THE GOVERNMENT THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT HIS RESIGNATION IS, IN FACT, MORE THAN A RETIREMENT AFTER MANY YEARS OF SERVICE AND DOES NOT REFLECT ANY DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN HIM AND THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. HIS DEPARTURE HAS IMMEDIATELY PROMPTED MUCH SPECULATION REGARDING THE CABINET SHUFFLE. THE VACANCY HE CREATES BY LEAVING PROVIDES ADDITIONAL ROOM FOR MANEUVER; HOWEVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW TOO MANY OF THE TOP LEVEL OF THE CABINET CAN BE SHIFTED EASILY BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THIS TIME. THUS, RUMORS OF SHIFTS FOCUS MORE ON THE LESSER PORTFOLIOS WITH ONE OR TWO NEWCOMERS COMING IN TO FILL SUCH VACANCIES AS MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT.

5. THERE IS ALSO SPECULATION THAT MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND FOR PUBLIC WORKS CHARLES DRURY WOULD LIKE TO RESIGN, AND POST MASTER GENERAL AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS BRYCE MACKASEY IS SUSPECTED OF BEING UNHAPPY IN CABINET. PC BACKBENCHER IONA CAMPAGNOLA CONTINUES TO BE HEARD AS A STRONG CANDIDATE FOR ONE OF THE VACATED POSITIONS, PROBABLY MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT.
ENDERS

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